

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 FREETOWN 1087

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SUBJ: PARM: ANNUAL POLICY & RESOURCE ASSESSMENT, PART I

REF: CERP 0001

1. U.S. INTERESTS

A. AMERICAN INTERESTS IN SIERRA LEONE RELATE DIRECTLY TO
BROADER GLOBAL AND REGIONAL INTERESTS AS DEFINED BY THE S/P
BROAD TRENDS FORECAST AND THE AF SUPPLEMENT TO THE FORECAST.
AMERICA WANTS TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS,
TO INCREASE INVESTMENT AND TRADE WITH WEST AFRICA, TO DEMONSTRATE
A HUMANITARIAN INTEREST IN ASSISTING SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, TO
PROMOTE BOTH INTERNAL AND REGIONAL STABILITY THROUGHOUT AFRICA,
AND TO ENCOURAGE MODERATE POSITIONS ON WORLD ISSUES.

B. U.S. INTERESTS IN SIERRA LEONE ARE:

(1) TO BUILD UPON SIERRA LEONE'S TRADITIONAL TIES AND FRIENDSHIP
WITH THE WEST, AIMING AT LEAST TOWARD THEIR MAINTAINING A TRULY
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NON-ALIGNED POSTURE.

(2) DEVELOPMENT OF SIERRA LEONE'S MINERAL RESOURCES AND A
HOSPITABLE CLIMATE FOR INCREASED AMERICAN INVESTMENT AND TRADE.

(3) A HUMANITARIAN INTEREST IN AN IMPROVED RATE OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT THAT EMPHASIZES EXPANDED FOOD PRODUCTION AND IMPROVED

WELL-BEING FOR THE RURAL POPULATION.

(4) DEVELOPMENT OF STABLE AND DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS WITHIN SIERRA LEONE AND MAINTENANCE OF COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY LIBERIA.

2. OVERVIEW

A. THE PACE OF IMPROVEMENT IN THE TONE OF RELATIONS WITH SIERRA LEONE CONTINUED AND PERHAPS EVEN ACCELERATED OVER THE PAST YEAR. MOMENTUM WAS MAINTAINED IN AMERICAN BILATERAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS DESPITE THE INEFFICIENCY OF THE GOSL. AT THE SAME TIME CARE WAS TAKEN TO EMPHASIZE THAT OUR ASSISTANCE IS INTENDED TO HELP THE GOSL HELP ITSELF. THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDED TO OUR INITIATIVES BY BROADLY SUPPORTING A WIDE SPECTRUM OF US EFFORTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND BY BEING HELPFUL IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA.

B. THE MAJOR FACTOR IN THIS STANCE WAS THAT PRESIDENT STEVENS WISHED IT TO BE SO. AN EXAMPLE OF HIS DESIRE CAN BE SEEN IN HIS PERSONAL DECISION, AGAINST THE VIEWS OF PRACTICALLY ALL HIS ADVISORS, TO VISIT THE US IN MAY 1976 TO MEET PRESIDENT FORD. IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THAT TRIP WAS NON-SUBSTANTIVE AND PRODUCED NO NEW ASSISTANCE FOR STEVENS, HE USED IT LOCALLY TO IMPROVE THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US.

C. 1977 BEGAN WITH A START TOWARD POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY. A LATE JANUARY UNIVERSITY STUDENT PROTEST, BASICALLY AGAINST PRESIDENT STEVENS' CORRUPTION, LED TO A VIOLENT APC-LED COUNTER DEMONSTRATION, A WIDESPREAD ANTI-APC NATIONAL REACTION, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CALLING OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS FOR LATE APRIL 1977, A YEAR EARLY. ALTHOUGH THE APC CONTROLLED ALL THE SEATS IN THE LAST PARLIAMENT AND PREVENTED THE PUBLIC ORGANIZATION OF RIVAL POLITICAL PARTIES, RECENT EVENTS SHOW THAT SIERRA LEONEANS WANT POLITICAL RIVALRY. THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION IS SURE TO CHANGE THE LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE. THE APC CAN MAINTAIN ITS COMPLETE CONTROL ONLY THROUGH VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION. EVEN A PARTIALLY FREE ELECTION IS SURE TO BRING SOME OPPOSITION CANDIDATES TO PARLIAMENT AND SUBSEQUENTLY MORE OUTSPOKEN CRITICISM OF GOSL ACTIONS AND STEVENS' LEADERSHIP THAN HAS BEEN PRESENT FOR A DECADE. LURKING BEHIND THE SCENES IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT VIOLENCE, UNREST, OR A GOVERNMENT PARALYZED BY PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION MAY CAUSE THE ARMY AND POLICE TO STEP IN TO RUN THE GOVERNMENT.

D. REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIFICS, IT IS FAIR TO ASSUME THAT THE NEXT PARIAMENT WILL CONTAIN FEWER THAN TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT INCUMBENTS, AND THE NEXT CABINET WILL BE COMPRISED, FOR THE MOST PART, OF NEW FACES. THUS, BOTH THE POLITICAL DIRECTION AND

INSTITUTIONAL ABILITIES OF THE GOSL IN THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO CANNOT BE PREDICTED ACCURATELY NOW. NEVERTHELESS, LOCAL POLITICS CURRENTLY LACK IDEOLOGICAL PRONOUNCEMENTS. THEREFORE, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE GOSL WILL REMAIN MODERATE, PRAGMATIC, AND GENERALLY RESPONSIVE TO WESTERN APPROACHES, SO LONG AS THERE IS AN INDICATION OF A WESTERN DESIRE TO HELP THE GOSL SOLVE ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. A CONTINUING CONNECTION WITH LIBERIA IN THE MANO RIVER UNION SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.

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E. ALTHOUGH POLITICAL PROBLEMS CURRENTLY DOMINATE ATTENTION, ECONOMIC ONES ARE SO SERIOUS THAT THEY WILL NOT BE RESOLVED IN THE SHORT RUN. THE OIL CRISIS, AN INABILITY TO CURTAIL IMPORTS, AND STAGNANT EXPORTS HAVE CAUSED A SERIOUS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEM. AN ARCHAIC REVENUE BASE THAT ENCOURAGES IMPORTS AND PENALIZES EXPORTS AND THE PENCHANT OF GOVERNMENT LEADERS, ESPECIALLY STEVENS HIMSELF, TO MAKE DEALS THAT ARE NOT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HAVE INFLATED PRICE TAGS TO ALLOW MAJOR KICKBACKS, HAS CAUSED AN IMPOSSIBLE SHORT-TERM FOREIGN DEBT SITUATION AND ALMOST HAS ELIMINATED PAYMENTS FOR ALL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES EXCEPT FOR CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES. THE HARD TERMS INSISTED ON BY THE IMF PREVENTED A STAND-BY BEING REACHED IN 1976. EVEN IF THE GOSL AND THE IMF COME TO TERMS, THE LACK OF GOSL FISCAL DISCIPLINE PROBABLY WILL CAUSE CONTINUING TENSION BETWEEN THEM. HET, AGREEMENT WITH THE IMF IS NECESSARY BEFORE THE IBRD RELEASES FUNDS FOR A FEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS DESIRED BY THE GOSL. IN THIS CONTEXT, FAILURE OF THE IMF/IBRD TO RESOLVE THE GOSL'S

PROBLEMS MAY BE USED LOCALLY AGAINST USG INTERESTS SINCE WE ARE PERCEIVED BY MANY TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICIES OF THESE MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS.
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F. ALTHOUGH DEFINITELY IDENTIFYING ITSELF AS AN AFRICAN STATE STRONGLY AFFILIATED WITH THE OAU, AS A PART OF THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT, AND IN FAVOR OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, THE GOSL'S INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE CONTEXT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US. GIVEN THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION, US BEHAVIOR WILL HAVE TO BE WELL CONCEIVED AND SENSITIVE TO NUANCES.

G. THE KEY FACTOR WILL BE THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE ARE PERCEIVED AS HELPING THE GOSL MEET ITS DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND IDENTIFYING OURSELVES WITH STATED GOSL PRIORITIES. THE RENEWED BILATERAL AID PROGRAM WILL BEGIN SHORTLY AND WILL HELP. FRUSTRATIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXPERIENCED AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPAND, ESPECIALLY AS THE GOSL HAS A REPUTATION AMONG MOST DONORS OF BUREAUCRATICALLY BEING A HARD COUNTRY TO DEVELOP PROJECTS FOR. IN THIS CONTEXT, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT AID/WASHINGTON WILL BE A CONTINUING THORN IN THE SIDE OF PREPARING A PROGRAM THAT WILL MEET GOSL DESIRES IN A REASONABLE TIME. ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS WILL BE FOR THE GOSL TO CONTRIBUTE ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE COSTS OF OUR AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. POSITIVE ACTION BY WASHINGTON ON A NEW PL 480 TITLE I AGREEMENT WOULD HELP RESOLVE THAT PROBLEM.

H. IN SUMMARY, USG PERFORMANCE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WILL PAY DIVIDENDS IN GOSL BEHAVIOR IN MULTILATERAL FORA. SPECIFIC COURSES OF ACTION WILL BE DISCUSSED BELOW.

3. OBJECTIVES, COURSES OF ACTION AND ISSUES

A. THE OBJECTIVE OF MAINTAINING SIERRA LEONE'S NON-ALIGNMENT WHILE IMPROVING ITS SUPPORT FOR US POSITIONS ON PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES WAS ACHIEVED SUCCESSFULLY BY EMPHASIZING TO TOP GOSL FOREIGN POLICY MAKERS US POSITIONS AND THE REASONING BEHIND OUR POSITIONS. THE GOSL RESPONDED PARTICULARLY WELL TO THOSE APPROACHES THAT CARRIED A
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PERSONAL TOUCH, SUCH AS A VISIT BY A SPECIAL EMISSARY OR A LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO PRESIDENT STEVENS. THE PERSONAL TOUCH NOT ONLY UNDERLINED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ISSUE BUT

IT ALSO FLATTERED THE PRESIDENT WHO LIKE TO FEEL HE IS BEING CONSULTED BY IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES. ON A WIDE RANGE OF LESSER ISSUES THE GOSL RESPONDED FAVORABLY BECAUSE WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH WARM AND CONSTRUCTIVE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH KEY MEMBERS OF THE GOSL AND POWER STRUCTURE, AND THEY TRUSTED OUR INTENTIONS.

B. DURING THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IMPROVE GOSL UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF US INTENTIONA TO MAINTAIN A FRIENDLY, HELPFUL ATTITUDE TOWARD SIERRA LEONE. IN PART THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES AND IN PART BY INCREASINGLY CONSTRUCTIVE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH THE POWER STRUCTURE. OUR EFFORTS WERE AIDED BY THE US INITIATIVE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND BY THE EXPECTATION THAT THE CHANGE IN THE US ADMINISTRATION PORTENDED A MORE SYMPATHETIC AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE BY THE USG TOWARD AFRICA. THE DECEMBER VISIT TO SIERRA LEONE BY A LARGE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, LED BY CONGRESSMAN DIGGS AND INCLUDING SENATOR BIDEN AND AMBASSADOR YOUNG, REINFORCED THIS EXPECTATION ON THE PART OF THE GOSL. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE MORE CONGRESSIONAL VISITS IN THE FUTURE.

C. ACCESS TO SIERRA LEONE'S RESOURCES, MARKETS, PORT AND AIRPORT FACILITIES REMAINED EXCELLENT. ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS WE HAVE HAD TO DISCUSS WITH SENIOR GOSL OFFICIALS THE NEED TO REMOVE BUREAUCRATIC STUMBLING BLOCKS AND IMPROVE THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE. AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN GENERALLY HAVE BEEN TREATED WELL BUT

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STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THE GOSL REMAIN, PARTICULARLY FOR SMALL INVESTORS. AT TIMES ONLY GOING TO PRESIDENT STEVENS WILL BREAK THE JOG JAM.

D. THE ONSET OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY ENCOURAGED SOME SMALL, ANTI-AMERICAN GROUPS TO TRY TO BLAME THE USG FOR SIERRA LEONE'S INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES. SEVERAL OF THE EMBASSY'S FRIENDS TOLD US OF SUCH INCIDENTS AND SOME WARNED THAT OFFICIALS OF THE GUINEAN EMBASSY WERE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE EFFORT. IN EVERY CASE WE KNOW ABOUT, SIERRA LEONEANS THEMSELVES REBUTTED THE CHARGES, OBVIOUSLY A MORE EFFECTIVE METHOD THAN THE EMBASSY'S HAVING TO MAKE A DENIAL. WE ATTRIBUTE THE LACK OF SUCCESS OF SUCH EFFORTS TO THE EXCELLENT PERSONAL RELATIONS ESTABLISHED WITH SIGNIFICANT SIERRA LEONEAN PERSONALITIES AND THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT INVOLVED IN INTERNAL POLITICS. NEVERTHELESS, WE REITERATE OUR BELIEF THAT THE MAJOR USG OBJECTIVE IS TO PROTECT THE USG FROM BEING USED AS A SCAPEGOAT IN LOCAL POLITICAL MANEUVERING. REINFORCING EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISHING NEW RELATIONSHIPS REMAINS A PRINCIPAL COURSE OF ACTION FOR ALL MISSION PERSONNEL.

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E. THE OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN SIERRA LEONE HAS MET WITH MIXED SUCCESS. DURING THE PAST YEAR NORTH KOREAN INFLUENCE IN SIERRA LEONE WANED FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS: THE ADVERSE PUBLICITY OF DRUG AND LIQUOR SALES BY NORTH KOREAN EMBASSIES IN SCANDANAVIA; COST OVER-RUNS ON THE NORTH KOREAN PROJECT TO BUILD A NEW TOWN HALL IN FREETOWN; AND AN EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN. CUBA PLAYS A LOW-KEYED ROLE PUBLICLY, BUT CUBAN INSTRUCTORS ARE TRAINING THE PARAMILITARY INTERNAL SECURITY UNIT AND ITS INFLUENCE MAY BE MORE THAN IS APPARENT. THE CHINESE ROLE IN SIERRA LEONE CONTINUES STRONG, IN CONTRAST TO THE AF ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA. THE CHINESE REMAIN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS, BRIDGE BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION OF A SMALL HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT, AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMPRESSIVE FREETOWN SPORTS STADIUM. THE SOVIETS HAVE CAPITALIZED ON A COMMERCIAL FISHING VENTURE THAT ALSO CONTAINS A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN FISHERIES, BUT THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO SIERRA LEONE'S DEVELOPMENT REMAINS MINIMAL AS DOES THEIR INFLUENCE. PRESIDENT STEVENS REPEATEDLY PRAISES THE CHINESE (AS HE DOES PEACE CORPS) AND IGNORES THE SOVIETS, MUCH TO THEIR UNHAPPINESS. THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAS LAUNCHED A PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF AN "INFORMATION OFFICER" BUT THE RESULTS ARE NOT IMPRESSIVE.

F. THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF SIERRA LEONE DO RECOGNIZE AND APPRECIATE US CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT. CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS

ON RURAL-BASED OPINION MAKERS, THE VISIBLE AND INCREASINGLY APPRECIATED PEACE CORPS EFFORTS IN EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, AND RURAL ORIENTED PROJECTS, THE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SPECIAL SELF-HELP PROGRAM, AND A LEAN BUT EFFICIENT INFORMATION PROGRAM HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THIS RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION. TO PREVENT DUPLICATION OF DONOR EFFORTS AND TO CONTINUE TO SEEK IMPROVED FISCAL PERFORMANCE BY THE GOVERNMENT WE WILL CONTINUE OUR CLOSE, BUT UNOBTRUSIVE, INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE UK, FRG, EEC, UNDP AND VISITING
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TEAMS FROM THE IMF AND IBRD. WE CONTINUE TO RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO EXERCISE CAUTION IN PROMOTING USG CONTRIBUTIONS TO SIERRA LEONE LEST WE RAISE UNREALIZABLE EXPECTATIONS. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE USPHS LASSA FEVER RESEARCH PROGRAM, AN OICI TRAINING PROGRAM WITH AID FUNDING, A MAJOR EXPANSION OF THE IMPORTANT CARE FEEDER ROAD PROGRAM, AND OTHER PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES HELP TO SHOW A WIDESPREAD US DESIRE TO HELP SIERRA LEONEANS. CONCRETE SUPPORT FOR THE MANO RIVER UNION SHOULD BE VIEWED IN THIS, AS WELL AS A MULTILATERAL, CONTEXT.

G. CONTINUING PL 480 TITLE II DONATIONS FOR SCHOOL FEEDING MAY BE A LARGE PROBLEM IN 1977. DESPITE EMBASSY, CARE, AND CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES EFFORTS TO MOVE THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM, THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING. THE INITIAL PLAN SUBMITTED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION WAS DEEMED UNACCEPTABLE AND DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE WITH THE MINISTRY. A FINAL DECISION PROBABLY WILL HAVE TO BE MADE SOON.

H. EFFORTS TO DEVELOP FURTHER CONTACTS WITH THE MILITARY WERE UNDERTAKEN CAREFULLY BECAUSE OF THE GOSL'S HYPERSENSITIVITY IN THIS AREA. THE VISIT OF THE NAVAL AND AIR ATTACHES IN JANUARY PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO HOST A RECEPTION AND TO PAY CALLS ON THE FORCE COMMANDER AND HIS DEPUTY. UNFORTUNATELY, THE SHIP VISIT TO FREETOWN SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY HAD TO BE ABORTED BECAUSE OF CIVIL UNREST AND DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY. ONCE THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION STABILIZES, WE HOPE ANOTHER SHIP VISIT CAN BE SCHEDULED.

I. BILATERAL ISSUES AND IMPORTANT GOSL OBJECTIVES IN RELATIONS WITH THE US REMAIN VALID FROM THE 1976 SUBMISSION.
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